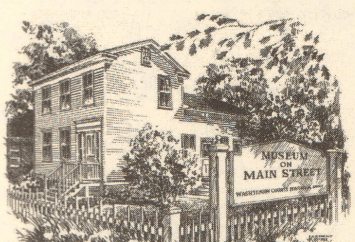
SEPTEMBER 2007



IMPRESSIONS

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER • FOUNDED 1857

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT
Richard L. Galant, PhD

VICE PRESIDENT
Ralph P. Beebe

RECORDING SECRETARY & IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
Judith Chrisman

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY
Pauline V. Walters

TREASURER
Patricia W. Creal

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Rosemarion Blake
Ann DeFreytas
Tom Freeman
Dean Greb
Susan Kosky
Leslie L. Loomans
Susan Nenadic
Patti Smith, JD
Jay Snyder
Jan Tripp
Susan Cee Wineberg
Cynthia Yao

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE
Harriet Birch
Hon. Julie Creal
Donald C. Smith, M.D.

MUSEUM DIRECTOR
Alice Cerniglia

INFORMATION
Published Seven Times A Year From September-May.

Museum On Main Street
500 N. Main Street at Beakes Street
Post Office Box 3336
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3336

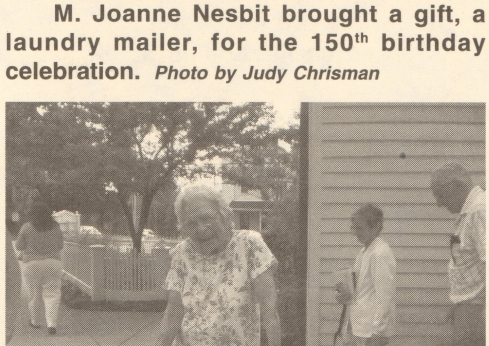
Phone: 734.662.9092
Email: wchs-500@ameritech.net
Web Site: www.washtenawhistory.org

Annual dues: January-December individual, $15; couple/family $25; student or senior (60+) $10; senior couple $19; business/association $50; patron $100.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER • RICHARD L. GALANT, PhD

Events Mark WCHS 150th Anniversary

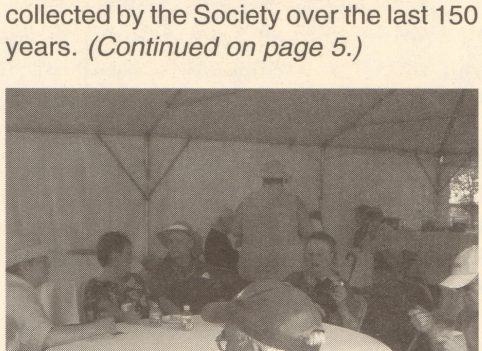
M. Joanne Nesbit brought a gift, a laundry mailer, for the 150th birthday celebration. *Photo by Judy Chrisman*

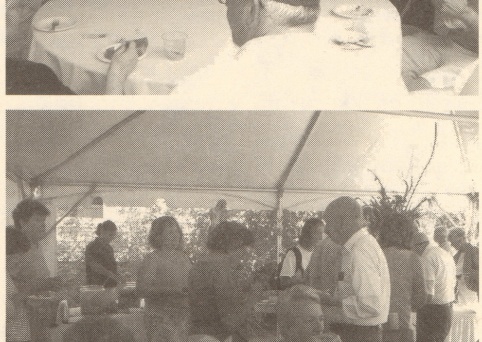


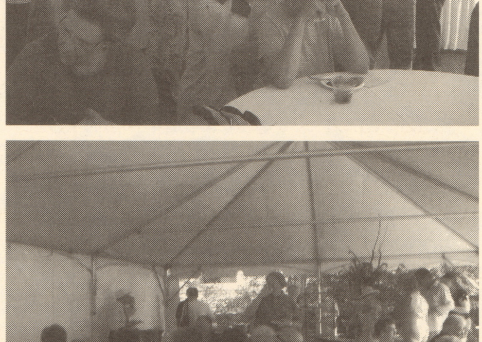
Former WCHS Board Member, Lucille Fisher. *Photo by Judy Chrisman*

Board member Susan Kosky's suggestion that the Society plan a series of events to mark its 150th anniversary had the Society sponsoring two events over the summer. The first event was a flag-raising dedication in the MoMs garden. Several board members prepped the garden for the dedication by planning gold and purple in a carpet design, common in the 1850s, with the flagpole as the centerpiece. An 1857 U.S. flag was raised in mid-June and now waves tall and high over the garden. The second event took place in late July when the Society hosted its 150th Big Celebration Party.

Community members from Washtenaw County came to see a special Sesquicentennial Anniversary Exhibit. The exhibit, still on display, portrays the history of Washtenaw County using artifacts collected by the Society over the last 150 years. *(Continued on page 5.)*







Guests enjoying the 150th birthday party at the MoMS. *Photos by Judy Calhoun*

ALICE CERNIGLIA • MUSEUM DIRECTOR

Holiday Memories

People in every culture celebrate holidays. Although the word "holiday" literally means "holy day," most American holidays are not religious, but commemorative in nature and origin. Because we as a nation are blessed with rich ethnic heritage, it is possible to trace some of the American holidays to diverse cultural sources and traditions, but all holidays have taken on a distinct American flavor. In the United States, the word "holiday" is synonymous with "celebration!"

In the strict sense, there are no federal (national) holidays in the United States. Each of the 50 states has jurisdiction over its holidays. In practice, however, most states observe the federal ("legal or public ") holidays, even though the President and Congress can legally designate holidays only for federal government employees.

The focus of holiday greetings will be illustrated by the use of old cards that are in our collection. Using the cards to set the theme we will create vignettes in the museum illustrated by stories, pictures and select collection items.

We are looking for more local stories, memories and items for this exhibit. When you think back on your family memories of the holidays, think of traditions you might have participated in and share them for this exhibit. Photos, cards and memorabilia are welcomed. If you have items you would like included. Please contact Alice at (734) 662-9092

In our next exhibit, "Holiday Memories," we will be celebrating Washtenaw County's culturally rich heritage by exploring some of the traditions of celebration and shared memories of the harvest and winter seasons festivities. The primary research for this project is being done by Susan Frekko, PhD, who is in the University of Michigan's Museum Studies program and is working with museum director, Alice Cerniglia, and curator, Judy Chrisman, on this effort. Dr. Frekko narrowed the focus to the following celebrations:

Halloween	October 31
Thanksgiving Day	fourth Thursday in November
Chanukah	December 4-13, 2007
Christmas Day	December 25
New Year's	December 31 –January 1
Valentines Day	February 14

Many other celebrations occur during this time span including Columbus Day, Yom Kippur, Veteran's Day, Kwanza, Sadie Hawkins Day, Washington's and Lincoln's birthday, to name a few. We will include information about these celebrations in our resource materials for this exhibit. We will highlight and feature in upcoming issues shared stories, traditions, recipes and games about the different celebrations. Halloween will be the first to be explored here.

Halloween

Halloween, the last day of October, has a special significance for children, who dress in funny or ghostly costumes and knock on neighborhood doors shouting "Trick or Treat!" Pirates and princesses, ghosts and witches all hold bags open to catch the candy or other goodies that the neighbors drop in.

Since the 800s, November 1st has been a religious holiday known as All Saints' Day. The Mass that was said on this day was called "Allhallowmas". The evening before became known as All Hallow e'en, or Halloween. Like some other American celebrations, its origins lie in both pre-Christian and Christian customs.

The Fantasy and Folklore of All Hallows Eve

Halloween. While Halloween (Allhallows Even) was observed by some churches with religious services, most persons regarded it as a secular festival.

In its strictly religious aspect, it is known as the vigil or *Hallowmas or All Saints' Day*, observed on November 1 by the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches.

The festival of Halloween is based on a combination of the Christian commemoration of the departed faithful (All Saints' Day) with the pre-Christian Celtic feast associated with a celebration of the end of summer and the Celtic New Year. Celts who lived in what is now known as Ireland, Scotland and parts of Great Britain celebrated their new year that began November 1. Allhallows' Even was observed on the evening of October 31st. Around 800 A.D., the day became known among Christians as **Allhallomas** which eventually changed to **All Hallow E'en**, or Halloween.

Celtic peoples adopted Christianity quickly, easily, and strongly. The conversion of Celtic peoples did not, however, keep them from celebrating some of their old customs. Attempts to replace the year-end custom in the old Celtic calendar were only partially successful. Some of our Halloween traditions date

back to these pre-Christian times.

Summer's end and the celebration of a good harvest has always been an important event in the life of agrarian peoples. Samhain "Hallowday" or Sanfain (sam + fuin) summer's end marked the end of the yearly cycle and was celebrated with both religious and agrarian rites. It was the period for threshing and of food preparation for the winter season. On that evening, so it was believed, present, past, and future became one. Celts gave thanks for the safe return of their cattle to winter quarters, and invoked their gods for prosperity and good crops for the coming year.

Samhain (sha – ween) was both the "end of summer" and a commemoration of the dead (devil's night). The spirits of the departed were believed to visit their kinsmen in search of warmth and good cheer as winter approached. It was a time when evil, as well as good, spirits returned to the living. Fairies were believed to migrate from one home to another, and Hallowe'en was the time when humans kidnapped by elfin folk could reclaim their lost loves or relatives.

Jack-O'-Lanterns were scooped out of turnips with skull-like faces carved into them. This may reflect the ancient custom of placing skulls around the tribal fire to keep evil demons away. Bobbing for apples is a relic of the "Ordeal by Water," signifying the passage of the soul to the hereafter over the waters separating them. To encourage fertility, the Halloween cat, the black cat, became a familiar symbol of Halloween. Some believed that if you held a mirror and ate an apple at the same time, you would see the reflection of your future mate in the mirror.

Immigrants from Ireland, Scotland and England, brought secular Halloween customs to the U.S. but the festival did not become popular until the latter part of the 19th century, at the time of the mass immigration from Ireland after 1840 (many who settled locally in Northfield Township), Halloween grew and changed over the years, with people, including those of other ethnic groups, adding (or subtracting) things from it. The association with ghosts and spirits goes back to older pagan customs. Germans took to celebrating Halloween with gusto. For them dressing up reminded them of *"Fasnacht," "Karneval" and "Fasching"* in the old country with masks and costumes; and witches and black cats reminded them of *Walpurgisnacht* and of fairy tales like "Hansel and Gretel."

Witches entered Halloween in the 19th century. One of the most important witches Sabbaths was held on Halloween. Witches were alleged to fly to these meetings on broomsticks, accompanied by black cats, who were their constant companions. Magical rites and ceremonies were performed by witches from all over the region at a sacred spot.

It is to the role of the witches in Halloween that Germans could relate especially well. The most famous sacred spot for witches was in the Harz mountain region of Germany. Until the 18th century, maps of Germany showed witches hovering over this spot, the *Blocksberg/Brocken*. For Germans Halloween blended with the "Walpurgisnacht," and the Witches Sabbath on the night leading into May 1st. On that day, bonfires, the Maifeuer (May fires) are burnt in the old country, to drive away the witches and the horned god, the devil.

Halloween, as we know it in America, with all the folk stories and urban legends, is a distinctly American phenomenon, with the "Trick or Treat"-bit appearing after 1930. The "trick or treat"-custom resembles an old Irish practice associated with Halloween Eve. Groups of peasants went from house to house demanding food and other gifts in preparation for the evening's festivities. Prosperity was assured for the liberal donors and threats were made against the stingy ones. A similar custom was practiced, and still is in some areas, by Germans. Knocking on doors for food and drink is practiced during the Karneval Season or at New Years. Best known is the custom of the *Star Singers on Epiphany*, carolers going from door to door, singing and collecting for poor relief for overseas missions.

Pranks such as wandering groups of celebrants blocking doors of houses, carrying away gates and plows, tapping on windows and throwing vegetables at doors (corn candy), also struck a familiar note. In rural areas and small towns, especially of Bavaria and Austria, tricks and pranks are to this day practiced in such customs as "stealing the Maibaum" in Bavaria.

The U.S.-style Halloween was returned by the Irish and the Scots to the countries of origin and became popular in England since the late 1960s with one exception, "Trick or Treat," even the phrase was not then used (although it seems to be used now). Nor was it accepted that failure to offer a good bounty was a punishable offense (trick).

The tendency to manipulate (often for commercial gain) rather than to celebrate folk festivals reflects the growing influence of a rational outlook on life and the progressive loss of folk vitality. Only the children with their costumes, masks and the "trick or treat" custom, keep the spooky and irrational—even if only pretending—from becoming another casualty of modernity.

Witches and black cats, ghosts and Frankensteins, ghosts' heads carved from pumpkins, candles, bobbing for apples, the "trick or treat" custom, candy and food, masks, parties and innocent little pranks also express joy in the present and the life-giving harvest that ensured the future.

New Board Members, WCHS

Patti Smith

Patti Smith was recently elected to the Board of Directors. Patti lives in Ann Arbor with her husband, Jeffrey Bletch, and their dog, Buddy. Patti is a special education teacher with the Detroit Public Schools. Prior to that, she taught at Washtenaw Community College, and practiced legal aid law, specializing in service for clients who are low income and/or have disabilities. In addition to WCHS, Patti is also on the Board of Directors for Project Grow, the Volunteer Coordinator for the Kerrytown Book Festival, a volunteer for the Ann Arbor Book Festival, Think Local First, the Sierra Club, the Michigan Theater, Vintage Dance Council and the Blind and Visually Impaired Children's Fund.

Jan Tripp

Jan Tripp grew up in West Michigan and came to Ann Arbor as a student in 1967 to study engineering. He has worked at General Motors as a mechanical engineer since 1974. He and his wife, Marilyn, have two grown children, Catherine and Jon as well as a grand-daughter, Chloe. Jan enjoys bicycling and family genealogy, and of course history! When his kids were growing up, Jan was active in Scouting through Troop 4 and the Huron Rowing Team.

Leslie L. Loomans

Leslie L. Loomans was born in Belding, Michigan. He retired as a Senior Vice President and CFO, NSF International in 2001 and as Vice President and Treasurer from DTE Energy in 2000. Currently, he lives in Ann Arbor. Les has been married for 41 years to Susan with one son, Jeffrey and one daughter, Elisa. Les is now the proud grandparent of three grandchildren. Les' community activities include: NSF International Board Member—1987 to present, the Board of Visitors, Institute for the Humanities, U of M, the !nvestment Committee, Great Sauk Trail, Boy Scouts of America, the Engineering Alumni Society Board of Governors, College of Engineering, U. of M.—ad hoc and past chairperson and the Matthaei Botanical Gardens Friends Board: 2002—2005.

Join Us at Our Sunday Programs

Sunday September 16, 2007 • 2 pm
ANOTHER ANN ARBOR
Speaker: *Carol Gibson & Lola Jones*
Location: David Byrne Center, 3261 Lohr Rd, AA

Sunday, October 21 • 2 pm
UNBUILT BUILDINGS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Speaker: *Fred Mayer*
Location: University Commons, Asa Gray Drive, AA

Continued on page 8.

Holiday Memories

Continued from page 3.

The following article relays a local YWCA Halloween party of 1912.

Sucessful Halloween Party at Ann Arbor's YWCA

From the YWCA 1912 archives
The Bentley Historical Library

About 70 girls attended the annual Halloween party given last evening at the City Y.W.C.A. and the affair was highly successful. The rooms had been decorated with huge devils, witches, cats and bats, the lights were hooded with red and the rooms were dimly lighted by Jack-o-lanterns. A witch stationed in one corner told fortunes with cards or with slips of apparently blank paper, which when scorched over a candle flame were found to have written upon them prophesies from the future. The girls were divided into groups and games were played and while the girls sat in the darkness listening to an exceedingly spooky ghost story a white robed figure appeared and poked clammy hands down their necks. Then the lights were turned up and cider, doughnuts and chestnuts were served.

Recipe

Cider, Lemon juice, cinnamon sticks and other herbs will make a wonderful treat. For a bewitching cold or hot cider brew add chunks of dry ice to the cider, after mixing it with cold water. The mixture will bubble and steam and provide a delicious spooky treat!

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Events

Continued from page 1.

Finally, as the Society continues to celebrate its Sesquicentennial Anniversary, three new board members have been elected recently to the Society's Board. They are Leslie Loomans, Patti Smith, and Jan Taylor. Welcome to each of you.

Volunteer Opportunities

Membership
Conservation
Research
Librarian

Hours, flexible

Call 662-9092 and ask for Alice.

Editor's Note

Greetings from the new editor of the *Impressions*! My name is Patti Smith and I am a new member of the WCHS Board of Directors. Since my bio is printed elsewhere in this issue, I won't blather on about myself here…but I will ask you to enjoy the newsletter! If you have any ideas about how we can improve it or if you have any questions, please contact me via email at DrPattiS@comcast.net

Thank you—happy reading!!

Annual Meeting and Potluck Supper

Front of Gordon Hall
Photo by Judy Chrisman

The annual meeting was held Wednesday, May 16, 2007 at the Dexter Area Museum in the former St. Andrew's church in Dexter. The well-attended meeting began with a short trip to Gordon Hall for a tour led by Gil Campbell. The Dexter Area Historical Society was able to purchase the historic building, home of Samuel Dexter, from the University of Michigan and is planning to restore it. Members were also able to tour the museum at the church before the potluck supper.

A wide-range of dishes from Susan Wineberg's guacamole salad to Sue Kosky's rhubarb pie and everything in between provided our usual delicious potluck. We sure have some good cooks among our members.

The business meeting followed. Board members gave short summaries of the past year. It was noted that the Bequest Fund and Endowment Fund both did well during the past year and that artifact donations are coming in at a record pace. Last year's officers and two directors were reelected. We also elected two new board members—Leslie Loomans and Jan Tripp. In addition, Patti Smith was appointed director-at-large. (In June she was appointed director to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Larry Kestenbaum.)

After the meeting Paul Cousins was kind enough to lead another tour of Gordon Hall for those who were not able to get to the earlier tour. Our thanks to the Dexter Area Historical Society and Museum for being such gracious hosts.

Back of Gordon Hall
Photo by Judy Chrisman

As the Washtenaw County Historical Society, we try to hold our annual meeting in a different part of the county each year. If you have any suggestions for next year's meeting, let us know.

Upcoming Events September 2007

Around the Town

On **September 17**, WCHS Board Member Susan Nenadic will speak at the University Commons about the Impact of the University of Michigan on Women in the 19th Century. She will also give the Kempf House noon lecture on **October 31**, speaking about "Fainting Couches and Physical Fitness—the Myth and Reality Concerning Women's Health in the Nineteenth Century".

The Cobblestone Farm will host its Fall Harvest on **October 14** from 12-4pm.

Upcoming events at the Kempf House include:

September 26: Noon Lecture: EPA's Motor Vehicle Lab: What Do They Do There

October 3: Noon Lecture: The Beatrix Potter Legacy: Booked for Conserving Natural Areas

October 10: Noon Lecture: Google Ann Arbor: An Update on Google Adwords' Office Here

October 17: Noon Lecture: What's New at the Bentley Historical Library

The Washtenaw County Historical Society's volunteers have agreed to bake a selection of local treats, compiled from heirloom cookbooks throughout the county as well as from our own collection for the Ann Arbor District library's "Ann Arbor Cooks" event on Thursday, **October 25th. 2007** from 7:00-8:30pm in the downtown library multi-purpose room. This effort serves to highlight both institutions up coming events. The Museum on Main Street's new exhibit "Holiday Memories" (October 17 – February 9th 2008) will feature some holiday recipes that were local favorites. The library is celebrating the new recipe database that will soon be available online to the public.

Around the County

Salem barn dance: Friday, September 14, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. at Three Cedars Barn
Six Mile Road at Curtis Road

SAHS Barn Dance will have:

- A live Band - Pix and Stix
- A Square Dance Caller
- Refreshments available

Square Dancing will be for all ages and all levels of experience. The caller works with children and beginners and keeps it fun for everyone. Come out and enjoy an evening of family fun and exercise.

Donations for admission are suggested at a rate of at least $5 per person. Groups are welcome. All proceeds will go to complete the restoration of the Dickerson Barn. Open to All - Donations Suggested for Admission.

Beyond Washtenaw

The Belleville Area Museum is having a Belleville Home Tour on Sunday, September 16 from 1:00-6:00. Tickets are $10 each in advance, $12 on the day of the tour.

Want to know more about your family tree? The Detroit Public Library Burton Historical Collection invites you to the 2nd Annual Family History Festival on September 29. The event will include lectures and discussions led by nationally known genealogists and classes on genealogical research. The festival will emphasize DNA research, Native American genealogy, African American genealogy and the National Archives. Please call (313) 833-1480 or visit: www.detroitpubliclibrary.org for more information.

The Plymouth Historical Society is hosting a Riverside Cemetery Walking Tour on September 29 at 10:30 am.

If anyone is interested in a bus trip to Lansing to the Michigan Historical Museum on a Sunday during the fall, please contact the WCHS at wchs-500@ameritech.net or 662-9092. The cost will be $11. Please leave your name, contact information, and availability dates.

Preparing for the flag pole are Dick Galant, Jay Snyder, Ralph Beebe, Dean Greb and Patty Creal.
Photo by: Pauline Walters

Saline Area Historical Society Update

September is a definitely busy month!

Week of Sept. 4-8 LODI TWP. HISTORY EXHIBIT. Special display in the Merchants' Building at the Saline Fair.

Sept. 14-15 YARD & SALVAGE SALE at Rentschler Farm Museum, Friday 9:00-5:00 and Saturday 9:00-2:00. This "under cover sale" benefits both the farm and depot museums. Good, clean and usable things at reasonable prices. Furniture, glassware, household items, linens, small appliances, craft supplies, books, games. Also, salvage items from demolished historic homes. If you've been saving your good, clean, usable discards (no clothing, no large appliances) to donate, drop them off Sept. 8 11:00-3:00 or Mon-Thurs. Sept. 10-13 5:00-7:00 p.m. Information: 734-429-3164; 429-1174 or 769-2219.

Wed. Sept. 19 7:30 p.m. at the old Methodist Church, S. Ann Arbor & E. Henry Streets in Downtown Saline. This is the first of our three fall Education Programs. Susan Nenadic will speak on Women's Education in the 19th Century and Its Effect on Their Employment. Susan is a Saline Schools Retiree and a Board Member for the county historical society. She will use a power point program to share her research on women and employment. Free.

Sat., Sept. 22 9:00 a.m. MONTHLY TEAM MEETING at the Rentschler Farm. Whenever our Team meets, these are open meetings. Guests are welcome.

Sat. Sept. 29 11:00-4:00 HARVEST TIME ON THE FARM Family fun, demonstrations, tours, crafts, entertainment, food, gift shop. Wagon ride from Sauk Trail. Park at the Sauk Trail Center or at the Automotive Components Plant. Use back walkways onto the farm property. Suggested adult admission: $1; children free.

WANTED: Help keep the approaches to the Depot Museum looking attractive. Two or three volunteers are needed to keep vegetation from growing between the RR tracks along the Depot Trail. This ¼ mile trail runs from N. Ann Arbor St., past the Depot Museum, and then to Harris St. The task needs to be done once or twice a month during the growing season and can be done at your convenience. Contact David Rhoads at David@hsa-remodel.com or call 429-5464 for more information. We need to keep the approaches to the Depot Museum looking attractive. Thank you.

WANTED: Additional volunteer GUIDES at the farm and/or the depot museums. Contact us for information: salinehistory@earthlink.net. Volunteers are the fuel that makes our organization come alive. Thank you.

WANTED: Your recycled ink jet cartridges. Our society receives $3 Rewards Money for each cartridge. A special box is in the gift shop at the farm. Or, for your convenience, just put your cartridge in a plastic bag and leave it at the farmhouse door. We'll find it.

Shooting Star floral display in the MoMS Garden. ***Photo by Susan Wineberg***

Above: President Dick Galant speaks at the Flagpole Dedication ceremony. Below: Dick Galant and Ralph Beebe raise the 1857 American flag. ***Photos by Cynthia Yao***

Our new flag pole, donated by Fox Tent & Awning, Co. ***Photo by Susan Wineberg***

MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET
A Museum Of County Life

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Post Office Box 3336
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-3336

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Ann Arbor, MI
Permit No. 96

SUNDAY • 2 PM
SEPTEMBER 16, 2007

"ANOTHER ANN ARBOR"

SPEAKER
CAROL GIBSON

DAVID BYRD CENTER
3261 LOHR ROAD
ANN ARBOR 48108

INFORMATION • 734.662.9092

MEMBER 2007
NANCY KROHN
905 ROBIN RD
ANN ARBOR MI 48103-3008

Sunday Programs

Continued from page 4.

Sunday, Nov. 18 • 2 pm
ART IN WASHTENAW COUNTY CEMETARIES
Speaker: *Wystan Stevens*
Location: Ypsilanti District Library, Whittaker Branch

Sunday, February 17, 2008 • 2 pm
ANN ARBOR BUILDINGS AND ARCHITECTURE
JOINT MEETING WITH THE COBBLESTONE FARM ASSOCIATION
Speaker: *Anita Toews*
Location: Cobblestone Farm Barn, 2781 Packard

Sunday, March 16 • 2 pm
WOMEN'S HISTORY—PRIOR TO 1918
Speaker: *Susan Nenadic*
Location: Ann Arbor District Library—Downtown branch

Sunday, April 20 • 2 pm
RESTORATION OF ST. HELENA LIGHTHOUSE WITH SCOUT TROOP 4
Speaker: *Dick Moehn*
Location: Glacier Hills Retirement Community—Hanson Room, AA

May 2008
WCHS ANNUAL MEETING
Potluck supper & election of officers • Date & location to be determined

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Washtenaw County Historical Society is to foster interest in and to elucidate the history of Washtenaw County from the time of the original inhabitants to the present. Its mission shall be to carry out the mandate as stated through the preservation and presentation of artifacts and information by exhibit, assembly, and publication. And to teach, especially our youth, the facts, value and the uses of Washtenaw County history through exhibits in museums and classrooms, classes, tours to historical places, and other educational activities.